

Message Text

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ORIGIN PA-02

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 PRS-01 CCO-00 SSO-00 /019 R

DRAFTED BY PA/M:KFITZPATRICK:KF

APPROVED BY PA/M:REHECKLINGER

S/S - PSEBASTIAN

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O 092024Z AUG 76 ZFF4

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UNCLAS STATE 197247 TOSEC 200226

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, MMOL, IR

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HEREWITH FULL TEXT LESLIE H. GELB BY-LINER NEW YORK
TIMES SUNDAY, AUGUST 8, HEADED "WILL THE FLAG FOLLOW
U.S. ARMS SALES?"

2. THROUGH ITS SALES OF WEAPONS OVERSEAS, THE UNITED
STATES HAS ENTERED A PERIOD OF INTRICATE MUTUAL DEPENDEN-
CIES THAT ARE HARD TO CONTROL AND WHOSE CONSEQUENCES ARE
HARD TO CALCULATE. IN SOME WAYS, THE ARMS ARRANGEMENTS
ARE NOW THE FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENTS OF TREATIES, BUT MUCH
MORE NEBULOUS.

3. RECENT ADMINISTRATION ARMS SALES HAVE PUT IRAN IN A
POSITION WHERE IT COULD NOT FIGHT WITHOUT THOUSANDS OF
AMERICANS ON THE SCENE, SAUDI ARABIA IN A POSITION TO
BECOME AN ARMS STOREHOUSE FOR ITS ARAB NEIGHBORS, AND
KENYA AND ZAIRE ON A TRACK OF MILITARY DEPENDENCY THAT
LEADS BACK TO WASHINGTON.

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4. THE NEW PERIOD IN AMERICAN ARMS EXPORTS HAS BEEN

SIGNALLED BY TWO DEVELOPMENTS: THE SALE OF HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS SYSTEMS TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THAT LACK THE SKILLS TO OPERATE THEM, AND THE ADVENT OF WHAT MIGHT BE CALLED "WHITE COLLAR MERCENARIES," THOUSANDS OF PRIVATELY EMPLOYED CIVILIANS WHO DESCEND ON THE BUYERS TO TEACH THEM HOW.

5. IRAN IS AN ALMOST PURE CASE IN POINT, AS A STUDY BY THE STAFF OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, MADE PUBLIC LAST WEEK, SHOWED.

6. THE STUDY, BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH ADMINISTRATION EXPERTS, HELD THAT IRAN IS NOW SO HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON AMERICAN PERSONNEL THAT IT COULD NOT GO TO WAR "WITHOUT U.S. SUPPORT ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS." IRAN HAS PURCHASED SOME OF THE LATEST MODELS OF AMERICAN ARTILLERY, MISSILES, AND AIRCRAFT. THE IRANIAN ARMED FORCES DO NOT HAVE THE TECHNOLOGICAL BACKGROUND TO OPERATE THEM "UNLESS INCREASING NUMBERS OF AMERICAN PERSONNEL GO TO IRAN IN A SUPPORT CAPACITY."

7. THERE ARE ALREADY MORE THAN 20,000 AMERICANS IN IRAN, MOSTLY CONNECTED WITH TRAINING IRANIAN ARMED FORCES. THE REPORT PROJECTED THAT BY 1980, THIS FIGURE COULD EASILY REACH 50,000 TO 60,000.

8. THE POINT THE SENATE STAFF REPORT WAS DRIVING AT WAS THIS: IN REVIEWING ARMS SALES, CONGRESS HAS BEEN PAYING ATTENTION ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY TO THE PRIMARY DECISION WHETHER TO SELL A PARTICULAR COUNTRY A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF WEAPONS, BUT VIRTUALLY IGNORING THE SECONDARY EFFECTS OF THE SALE.

9. AFTER THE CONTRACT HAS BEEN SIGNED AND THE WEAPONS DELIVERED, AMERICANS ARRIVE EN MASSE TO DO THE ADMINISTERING AND THE ON-SITE TRAINING FOR UP TO 10 YEARS. UNDER PRESSURE FROM CONGRESS TO REDUCE AMERICAN MILITARY TRAINING MISSIONS, THE PENTAGON HAS INCREASINGLY TURNED THESE TASKS OVER TO PRIVATE CONTRACTORS. THE CIVILIANS ARE RELATIVELY IMMUNE FROM AMERICAN GOVERNMENT CONTROL.

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10. IT MIGHT SEEM THAT IRAN'S DEPENDENCY WOULD GIVE THE UNITED STATES A LARGE MEASURE OF CONTROL OVER A DECISION BY THE SHAH TO USE FORCE. BUT IN A WAY, THE AMERICANS COULD BECOME HOSTAGES AS WELL AS TRAINERS. IF WASHINGTON WERE TO CHOOSE NOT TO BACK THE SHAH IN CONFLICT, IT WOULD RISK RUPTURING RELATIONS WITH IRAN, AND RISK PLACING THE AMERICANS IN JEOPARDY.

11. SAUDI ARABIA'S RULERS DO NOT HAVE QUITE THE SAME TASTE FOR PRESTIGE WEAPONS AS THE SHAH, BUT A SIMILAR KIND OF SITUATION COULD EVOLVE THERE. THERE ARE ALREADY SEVERAL THOUSAND AMERICAN CIVILIAN-CONTRACTOR PERSONNEL WORKING ON MILITARY MATTERS IN THAT COUNTRY.

12. IT LOOKS AS IF MORE ARE TO COME. THE ADMINISTRATION DECIDED TO SELL THE SAUDIS SIDEWINDER AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES, TOW TUBE-LAUNCHED OPTICALLY TRACKED ANTI-TANK MISSILES, MAVERICK AIR-TO-SURFACE MISSILES, AND AN EARLY VERSION OF THE LASER-GUIDED, SO-CALLED "SMART BOMBS." THE SAUDIS WILL HAVE TO IMPORT MANY MORE AMERICANS TO MANAGE THEM.

13. ISRAELI CONCERN THAT SOME OF THOSE WEAPONS MAY BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER ARAB STATES SURROUNDING ISRAEL, ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS INSIST, IS NOT WELL-FOUNDED. BUT THE QUANTITY OF ARMS BEING SOLD IS DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN; THE HYPOTHETICAL MODEL USED BY THE PENTAGON AND THE SAUDIS TO JUSTIFY THE SALES WAS A SIMULTANEOUS ATTACK AGAINST SAUDI ARABIA BY IRAQ AND SOUTH YEMEN. SIMILAR QUESTIONS COULD BE RAISED ABOUT THE THREAT TO IRAN. THE RUSSIANS ARE THE MAIN POTENTIAL ENEMY, BUT NO AMOUNT OF ARMS WOULD BE ENOUGH FOR THE CONTINGENCY. FOR ALL OTHER EVENTUALITIES, IRAN HAS MORE THAN ENOUGH ON PAPER.

14. THE SAME CANNOT BE SAID OF THE SALES TO KENYA AND ZAIRE. IT IS SIMPLY A FACT THAT THEIR NEIGHBORS - ANGOLA, UGANDA, AND SOMALIA, TO NAME THREE - ARE MUCH BETTER ARMED.

15. THE POLICY PROBLEM WITH THE RELATIVELY MODEST UNCLASSIFIED

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AIRCRAFT AND ARMOR TO KENYA AND ZAIRE IS THAT IT WILL COMPEL THE UNITED STATES TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THOSE COUNTRIES THAT IT DID NOT HAVE TO MAKE BEFORE.

16. ARMS SALES TO TAIWAN PRESENT A DIFFERENT, EVEN MORE COMPLICATED PROBLEM. THE ADMINISTRATION'S STATED GOAL IS TO MAKE POSSIBLE MILITARY "SELF-SUFFICIENCY." IF A FUTURE ADMINISTRATION WERE TO DECIDE TO ABROGATE THE DEFENSE TREATY WITH TAIWAN, "SELF-SUFFICIENCY" MIGHT MAKE IT EASIER TO DO SO. AND CHINA INSISTS ON ABROGATION OF THE TREATY BEFORE NORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES ARE ESTABLISHED. BUT FROM A SHORT-TERM PERSPECTIVE, THIS ARMS POLICY COULD CAUSE PEKING TO BELIEVE THAT WASHINGTON WAS TRYING TO PROMOTE A PERMANENT POLITICAL SEPARATION OF TAIWAN FROM THE MAINLAND REGIME.

THIS, IN TURN, COULD BADLY DAMAGE CHINESE-AMERICAN RELATIONS.

17. ARMS EXPORTS ARE AN INCREDIBLY COMPLICATED ENTERPRISE. THE ARGUMENTS CANNOT BE REDUCED TO "WE DO NOT WANT TO BE MERCHANTS OF DEATH" VERSUS "IF WE DON'T SELL SOMEONE ELSE WILL," OR EVEN TO THE CONTENTION THAT SELLING CREATES A MORAL OBLIGATION TO ASSIST IN COMBAT. NOT SELLING, AND DENYING A NATION THE MEANS TO DEFEND ITSELF, IS ALSO A MORAL CHOICE. END TEXT. HABIB

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, ARMS, TOSEC, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, MILITARY SALES, DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE197247
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: KFITZPATRICK:KF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760306-0639
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760871/aaaackev.tel
Line Count: 179
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN PA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 APR 2004 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <07 JAN 2005 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS MATERIAL
TAGS: SOPN, MMOL, IR, US, NEW YORK TIMES, (GELB, LESLIE H)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006